

COUNTY OF YORK

MEMORANDUM

DATE: December 3, 1999 (BOS Mtg. 12/15/99)
TO: York County Board of Supervisors
FROM: Daniel M. Stuck, County Administrator *DM*
SUBJECT: Transportation Enhancement Program Application for the Yorktown Wharf Project

ISSUE

Authorization and endorsement of an application for funding assistance through the Transportation Enhancement Program to implement proposed improvements to the Yorktown Wharf area. The amount of the funding request is \$950,000.

CONSIDERATIONS

1. The federally authorized Transportation Enhancement Program provides opportunities for a variety of transportation system "enhancements" that improve aesthetics, provide quality-of-life benefits, or that better integrate transportation projects into communities and the natural environment. It is through this program that the County was awarded \$528,000 to assist in the construction of the Riverwalk and, in 1999, \$550,000 to assist in the Wharf-Area Improvements project. The 1999 project award represented approximately one-third of the \$1.5 million requested by the County. This year's proposed request is for the balance of the \$1.5 million – i.e. \$950,000.
2. The Virginia Transportation Enhancement Program is administered by the Virginia Department of Transportation and project funding decisions are made through an application evaluation process conducted by VDOT and ultimately approved by the Commonwealth Transportation Board. There are eleven categories of eligibility for transportation enhancement projects:
 - Facilities for bicycles and pedestrians
 - Acquisition of scenic easements and scenic or historic sites
 - Scenic or historic highway programs
 - Landscaping and other scenic beautification
 - Historic preservation
 - Rehabilitation of historic transportation buildings / structures
 - Preservation of abandoned railroad corridors
 - Control and removal of outdoor advertising
 - Archaeological planning and research
 - Mitigation of highway run-off pollution
 - Transportation Museums

Approximately \$18 million is anticipated to be available for distribution during this year's funding cycle. There is a requirement that at least 20% of the total cost of a project be covered by local funds (i.e. - 80% federal/20% local). The program is not a "grant" but rather is structured to provide reimbursement to the applicant for eligible project expenditures, up to the authorized amount. Applications for funding under this year's program must be submitted by January 31, 2000.

3. A major portion of the improvements proposed in the Wharf area (as shown and described in the concepts that were developed as a result of the *Focus on Yorktown II - the Wharf* workshop) are potentially eligible under the following program categories:

- Provision of facilities for bicycles and pedestrians
- Landscaping and other scenic beautification
- Historic preservation
- Rehabilitation and operation of historic transportation buildings, structures and facilities
- Establishment of transportation museums

Based on the preliminary cost estimates developed by Carlton Abbott and Partners, the project design consultant, the potentially eligible project elements have an estimated cost of \$4.55 million (the total preliminary budget estimate for the entire Wharf-area development project, including the retail / food service space shown in the concept but not eligible for enhancement funding, is approximately \$5.3 million). The staff has reviewed the history of project approvals since the inception of the Enhancements Program in 1993 and has found that the largest single award was \$1.5 million (most have been substantially less). Therefore, last year's request was for \$1.5 million in Enhancement Program funds, with the remainder of the costs to be covered by local funds (whether tourism funds or funds raised by the Yorktown Foundation). This amount of local funding is well above the minimum 20% local match requirement (the degree of local commitment, above the required minimum, is one of the application scoring criteria). Essentially, structuring the project proposal in this manner represents a pledge to commit several year's worth of the tourism-designated lodging tax revenues to the implementation of this project. Staff believes this is a "worst-case" projection since it is anticipated that the efforts of the Yorktown Foundation will provide supplementary funding for the Wharf-area project, thus allowing the lodging tax revenues to be considered for other projects. Of course it is also important to keep in mind that this proposed budget represents a "best-case" situation from the standpoint of federal funding since our application this year may not be successful at all, or a reduced federal share might be offered.

4. The final paragraph in proposed Resolution No. R99-229 contains language required by the Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) committing the County to repay VDOT for any expenditure on a project which the County subsequently elects to cancel. In this regard, it is important to note that the Board will have an opportunity to decide whether or not to accept a project funding award, if it is offered, and before any expenditures are made. As part of this future action, the Board would specifically

approve the source and amount of any local matching funds necessary to proceed with the project.

5. A draft copy of the application package is attached for the Board's information and review. Prior to submission, this package will be enhanced with color graphics, maps, any letters of support that may be received, and other pertinent materials.
6. The project has been submitted for endorsement by the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) as required by VDOT procedures. The MPO endorsed the project last year.

RECOMMENDATION

The Transportation Enhancement Program provides a good opportunity to secure non-County funding for implementation of a major element of the Yorktown improvement effort. The project concept is described in the adopted Yorktown Master Plan and was refined and re-affirmed in the July 1998 *Focus on Yorktown II - the Wharf* workshop. The project will complement the Riverwalk, also funded through the Enhancement Program, and will dramatically transform and improve the focal point of the Yorktown waterfront. The project meets the eligibility requirements for Enhancement Program funding and I recommend that the Board authorize submission of the application for \$950,000 through the adoption of proposed Resolution No. R99-229.

Carter/3337:jmc

Attachments:

- Draft application package
- Proposed Resolution No. R99-229